

GENRE TEACHING IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS:

AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE GENRE DETECTIVE STORY

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to reflect upon the use of teaching strategies to improve writing, in different social contexts, bearing in mind the students' individual track, and their specific cultural-historical situations. The study was based on principles derived from the socio-discursive interactionist theory (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) and on the possibility of making genres teachable through didactic sequences (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). An applied comparative work was developed using a didactic sequence, related to the detective story genre, with two 5th grade classes in different elementary schools. Although the schools were located in the same geographical region, one was a local-government-run public school, with students belonging to a low socio-economic class, and the other was a private, religion-oriented school, with students belonging to a high socio-economic class. The study demonstrates that the work with didactic sequence has productive consequences in the students' textual productions from both schools, independently of the social environment in which the work with genre was developed. If quantitative growth was more evident in the public school, qualitative growth between early and final productions in both schools was significant and reveals the importance of consistent work on genre teaching.

KEYWORDS: socio-discursive interactionism; genre; social environment; teaching; learning.

Chinese

[Translation Shek Kam Tse]

不同社会环境下的文类教学：侦探故事的一项实验

摘要：本文目的是鉴于学生各自成长轨迹和他们特有的文化历史情况，反馈了在不同社会现实情况下提高写作的教学策略。这项研究基于社会 - 发散 交互主义理论(Bronckart, 1999, 2006)

和通过教导次序让流派可教的可能性(Schneuwly & Dolz,

2004)。在来自不同学校的两个5年级班级，运用教导次序发展出一项有关于侦探故事流派的实验比较工作。尽管两所学校位于同一地区，但一个是当地政府设立的公办学校，学生来自底层社会经济阶层，而另一所学校是一个私立教会学校，学生来自上等社会经济阶层。研究表明两所学校的教学次序工作在学生作文产出方面都产生了显著的成果，与发展出流派工作的社会环境无关。如果公立学校的数量增长更加明显，两所学校从开始到结束所提高的质量成果就都会很明显，这也表明流派教学的工作一致性的重要性。

关键词：社会 - 发散 交互主义，流派，社会环境，教学，学习。

关键词：社会交互主义理论；文类；社会环境；教与学

Dutch

[Translation Tanja Janssen]

TITEL: Het onderwijzen van genre in verschillende sociale contexten; een experiment met het genre van het detectiveverhaal

SAMENVATTING: Dit artikel heeft ten doel in te gaan op het gebruik van onderwijsstrategieën voor het verbeteren van de schrijfvaardigheid, in verschillende sociale contexten, rekening houdend met individuele verschillen tussen leerlingen, hun specifieke voorgeschiedenis en culturele situaties. Het onderzoek is gebaseerd op principes afkomstig uit de sociaal-discursieve interactionistische theory (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) en op de mogelijkheid om genres onderwijsbaar te maken met behulp van didactische sequenties (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Een toegepast comparatief onderzoek werd opgezet waarin een didactische sequentie met betrekking tot het genre van het detectiveverhaal werd gebruikt in twee klassen (Grade 5) op verschillende basisscholen. Hoewel de scholen in hetzelfde gebied gelocaliseerd waren, was één school een niet-openbare overheidsschool met leerlingen die tot een lage sociaal-economische klasse behoorden, en was de andere school een confessionele privé-school met leerlingen die tot een hoge sociaal-economische laag behoorden. Het onderzoek toont aan dat het werken met een didactische sequentie een positieve uitwerking had op de leerlingteksten, op beide scholen, onafhankelijk van de sociale omgeving waarin het werken met genre was ontwikkeld. Op de openbare school was de kwantitatieve groei duidelijker aanwijsbaar, maar de kwalitatieve groei tussen de eerste en laatste teksten was op beide scholen significant, wijzend op het belang van het consequent werken aan genre-onderwijs.

TREFWOORDEN: sociaal-discursief interactionisme, genre, sociale omgeving, onderwijzen, leren

Finnish

[Translation Katri Sarmavuori]

TITTELI: GENREOPETUS ERI SOSIAALISISSA YMPÄRISTÖISSÄ: KOE SALAPOLIISIKERTOMUSGENRESTÄ

ABSTRAKTI: Tämän artikkelin tarkoituksena on reflektoida kirjoittamista edistävien opetusstrategioiden käytöstä erilaisista sosiaalisista realiteeteista, pitää mielessä oppilaiden yksilöllisiä piirteitä ja erityisiä kulttuurihistoriallisia tilanteita. Tutkimus perustuu sosioidiskursiivisen interaktioteorian periaatteisiin (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) ja mahdollisuuteen tehdä genreistä opetettavia didaktisten sekvenssien avulla (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Soveltava vertaileva työ kehitettiin didaktista sekvenssiä käyttäen suhteuttaen sitä salapoliisikertomusgenreen kahden eri koulun 5. luokan kanssa. Vaikka koulut sijoittuivat samaan maantieteelliseen alueeseen, toinen koulu oli paikallinen valtion yleinen koulu, jossa oppilaat kuuluivat matalaan sosioekonomiseen luokkaan, ja toinen oli yksityinen, uskonnollisesti suuntautunut,

jossa oppilaat kuuluivat korkeaan sosioekonomiseen luokkaan. Tutkimus osoittaa, että työllä didaktisten sekvenssien kanssa on tuottavia seurauksia oppilaiden tekstien tuottamiseen molemmissa kouluissa riip-

pumatta sosiaalisesta ympäristöstä. Jos määrällinen kasvu oli selvempää yleisessä koulussa, laadullinen kasvu varheman ja myöhemmän tuotoksen välillä molemmissa kouluissa oli merkitsevä ja paljasta jatkuvan genretyöskentelyopetuksen merkityksen.

AVAINSANAT: sosioidiskursiivinen interaktionismi; genre; sosiaalinen ympäristö; opetus; oppiminen.

French

[Translation Laurence Pasa]

TITRE : L'ENSEIGNEMENT DES GENRES LITTÉRAIRES DANS DIFFÉRENTS CONTEXTES SOCIAUX : UNE EXPERIENCE AVEC LE ROMAN POLICIER

RÉSUMÉ : Cet article invite à s'interroger sur l'utilisation de stratégies d'enseignement visant à améliorer la production écrite, dans différentes réalités sociales, considérant les parcours personnels des élèves et leurs situations historico-culturelles spécifiques. Le travail présenté se base sur les principes issus de l'interactionnisme socio-discursif (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) et sur la possibilité d'enseigner les genres au travers de séquences didactiques (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Une étude empirique comparative a été menée, au travers d'une séquence didactique sur le roman policier, dans deux classes de CM2 dans différentes écoles primaires. Bien que les écoles soient situées dans la même zone géographique, l'une d'elle est une école publique dirigée par le gouvernement local, comprenant des élèves de milieux défavorisés, et l'autre est une école privée religieuse, dont les élèves sont issus de classes sociales favorisées. L'étude démontre que les séquences didactiques ont eu des effets productifs sur les productions écrites des élèves et ce dans les deux écoles, indépendamment du contexte social dans lequel le travail sur le genre a été mené. Si les gains quantitatifs étaient plus importants dans l'école publique, les bénéfices qualitatifs entre les productions initiales et finales étaient significatifs dans les deux écoles et révèlent l'importance d'une approche cohérente de l'enseignement des genres.

MOTS-CLÉS : interactionnisme socio-discursif, genres, contexte social, enseignement, apprentissage.

Greek

[Translation by Panatoya Papouliá Tzelepi]

Τίτλος. Η διδασκαλία των κειμενικών ειδών σε διαφορετικά κοινωνικά περιβάλλοντα: Ένα πείραμα με το κειμενικό είδος «αστυνομική ιστορία»

Περίληψη. Αυτό το άρθρο αποτελεί στοχασμό στη χρήση διδακτικών στρατηγικών για τη βελτίωση του γραψίματος των μαθητών, σε διαφορετικές κοινωνικές πραγματικότητες, έχοντας κατά νουν τις ατομικές πορείες των μαθητών και τις ειδικές πολιτισμικές και ιστορικές τους συνθήκες. Η μελέτη βασίστηκε στις αρχές της κοινωνιο-διαλογικής αλληλεπιδραστικής θεωρίας (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) και στην πιθανότητα να καταστήσει τα είδη των κειμένων διδακτά μέσω διδακτικών ακολουθιών (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Μια εφαρμοσμένη συγκριτική εργασία αναπτύχθηκε με τη χρήση διδακτικής ακολουθίας, σχετική με το είδος της αστυνομικής ιστορίας, με δύο τάξεις (5η τάξη) σε διαφορετικά δημοτικά σχολεία. Παρά το ότι τα σχολεία ήταν στην ίδια γεωγραφική περιοχή, το ένα ήταν δημόσιο με μαθητές χαμηλού κοινωνικοοικονομικού επιπέδου και το άλλο ιδιωτικό, θρησκευτικά προσανατολισμένο, με μαθητές υψηλού κοινωνικοοικονομικού επιπέδου. Η μελέτη δείχνει ότι η εργασία με τις διδακτικές ακολουθίες έχει παραγωγικές συνέπειες στην παραγωγή κειμένων των μαθητών και στα δύο σχολεία ανεξάρτητα από το κοινωνικό περιβάλλον στο οποίο αναπτύχθηκε η εργασία με αυτό το κειμενικό είδος. Εάν η ποιοτική αύξηση ήταν εμφανέστερη στο δημόσιο σχολείο, η ποιοτική ανάπτυξη μεταξύ αρχικής και τελικής παραγωγής ήταν σημαντική και στα δύο σχολεία, πράγμα που αποκαλύπτει τη σπουδαιότητα της συστηματικής εργασίας για τη διδασκαλία των κειμενικών ειδών.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Κοινωνιο-διαλογική αλληλεπίδραση, κειμενικά είδη (genre) κοινωνικό περιβάλλον, διδασκαλία, μάθηση

Italian

[Translation Manuela Delfino, Francesco Caviglia]

TITOLO: L'insegnamento dei generi letterari in diversi ambienti sociali: un esperimento con il racconto poliziesco.

SINTESI: Questo articolo si propone di riflettere sull'uso di strategie didattiche per migliorare la capacità di scrivere, in diverse realtà sociali, prestando attenzione al percorso individuale degli studenti e alla loro specifica situazione storica e culturale. Lo studio si basa sui principi che derivano dalla teoria interazionista socio-discorsiva (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) e sulla possibilità di proporre una didattica dei generi, svolta tramite le sequenze didattiche (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004).

Dopo aver sviluppato una sequenza didattica, si è svolto un lavoro applicato comparativo, inerente il racconto poliziesco, con due classi dell'ultimo anno di diverse scuole primarie. Malgrado le scuole fossero situate nella stessa zona geografica, una era una scuola pubblica dipendente dall'amministrazione locale, con studenti appartenenti alla classe socio-economica bassa, e l'altra era una scuola privata, religiosa, con studenti appartenenti alla classe alta. Lo studio dimostra che il lavoro con la sequenza didattica ha avuto degli effetti positivi sulla produzione dei testi in entrambe le scuole, indipendentemente dall'ambiente sociale in cui il lavoro sul genere è stato sviluppato. Se la crescita dal punto di vista quantitativo è stata più evidente nella scuola pubblica, la crescita qualitativa tra la produzione iniziale e quella finale in entrambe le scuole è stata significativa e rivela l'importanza di un lavoro coerente sul genere letterario insegnato.

PAROLE CHIAVE: interazionismo socio-discorsivo, genere testuale, genere letterario, ambiente sociale, insegnamento, apprendimento.

Polish

[Translation Elżbieta Awramiuk]

TITUŁ: Nauczanie gatunków w różnych środowiskach społecznych: eksperyment z powieścią detektywistyczną

STRESZCZENIE: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest refleksja nad nauczycielskimi strategiami, służącymi rozwijaniu umiejętności pisania, stosowanymi w różnych kontekstach społecznych, przy uwzględnieniu indywidualnych potrzeb edukacyjnych uczniów i ich specyficznej kulturowo-historycznej sytuacji. Studium zostało oparte na zasadach wywodzących się z interakcjonistycznej teorii socjo-dyskursywnej (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) i na możliwości nauczania gatunków poprzez sekwencje dydaktyczne (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Analizie porównawczej poddano sekwencje dydaktyczne zastosowane do powieści detektywistycznej w dwóch klasach piątych w różnych szkołach podstawowych. Chociaż szkoły były ulokowane w tym samym rejonie geograficznym, jedna z nich, w której uczniowie należeli do niższej klasy społecznej, była lokalną szkołą publiczną prowadzoną przez rząd, a druga była wyznaniową szkołą prywatną, w której uczniowie należeli do wyższej klasy społecznej. Badania dowodzą, że nauczanie z wykorzystaniem sekwencji dydaktycznych pozytywnie wpływa na sposób pisania w obu typach szkół, niezależnie od środowiska społecznego, w którym prowadzono pracę nad gatunkiem. Ilościowy wzrost był bardziej widoczny w szkole publicznej, wzrost jakościowy między pierwszym i ostatnim tekstem pisany był znaczący w obu szkołach, co potwierdza znaczenie systematycznej pracy nad nauczaniem gatunków.

SŁOWA-KLUCZE: interakcjonizm socjo-dyskursywny, gatunek, środowisko społeczne, nauczanie, uczenie się

Portuguese

[Translation Paulo Feytor Pinto]

TÍTULO: Ensino de géneros em diferentes meios sociais: uma experiência com o género da narrativa policial.

RESUMO: Este artigo pretende reflectir acerca de estratégias de ensino para a melhoria da escrita em diferentes realidades sociais, tendo presente o percurso individual de cada aluno e a sua situação histórico-cultural. O estudo baseou-se nos princípios da teoria da interação sócio-discursiva (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) e na possibilidade de ensinar os géneros textuais através de sequências didáticas (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Foi desenvolvido um trabalho de comparação aplicada com recurso a uma sequência didática relativa ao género da narrativa policial, com duas turmas do 5º ano, em duas escolas diferentes. Embora elas se situem na mesma zona geográfica, uma era uma escola pública gerida pelas autoridades locais com alunos de estratos sócio-económicos baixos enquanto a outra era um colégio privado, de cariz confessional, com alunos da classe alta. O estudo demonstra que o trabalho com sequências didáticas teve consequências produtivas nos textos escritos pelos alunos de ambas as escolas, independentemente do meio social em que o trabalho foi desenvolvido. Se a melhoria quantitativa foi mais evidente na escola pública, significativas melhorias qualitativas entre as produções iniciais e finais foram observadas em ambas as escolas revelando

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: interação sociodiscursiva, género, meio social, ensino, aprendizagem.

Spanish

[Translation Ingrid Marquez]

TÍTULO : ENSEÑANZA POR GÉNERO LITERARIO EN DIFERENTES ÁMBITOS SOCIALES: UN EXPERIMENTO CON EL GÉNERO DE CUENTO DETECTIVESCO

RESUMEN: Este artículo plantea reflexiones sobre el uso de estrategias de enseñanza para mejorar la escritura en diferentes ámbitos sociales, tomando en cuenta el nivel individual de cada estudiante y su situación cultural-histórica particular. El estudio se basa en principios que provienen de la teoría interaccionista socio-discursiva (Bronckart, 1999, 2006) y en la creencia de que los géneros se pueden enseñar a través de secuencias didácticas (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Un trabajo comparativo aplicado fue desarrollado usando una secuencia didáctica relacionada con el género de cuento detectivesco en dos salones de quinto año en dos escuelas primarias. Aunque las dos se encuentran en la misma región geográfica, una es pública, perteneciendo al gobierno local y con estudiantes de clase socioeconómica baja, mientras que la otra es particular y religiosa, con estudiantes de la clase alta. El estudio demuestra que el trabajar con secuencias didácticas rinde frutos en cuanto a los textos producidos en las dos escuelas, independientemente del ambiente social en el cual el trabajo de género literario se desarrolle. Aunque el crecimiento cuantitativo fue más evidente en la escuela de gobierno, en ambas escuelas el avance cualitativo de la primera a la última producción de texto fue significativo, y revela la importancia de trabajar con empeño en la enseñanza de género literario.

PALABRAS CLAVE: interaccionismo socio-discursivo, género, ambiente social, enseñanza, aprendizaje.

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on principles coming from the socio-discursive interactionist theoretical framework, we present the possibility of using a *didactic model* centered on a certain genre and taught through a *didactic sequence* (both concepts will be explained in the following sections). The detective story genre was used in this proposal, carried out in two schools. Even though the schools where the project was developed were located in the same geographical region of Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil, they had different social realities. The research was developed in a local-government-run public school, located in the outskirts of the city, and in a private, religion-oriented school, located in the city centre. Participants of the study were characterized by diverse literacy backgrounds. Since both schools agreed to take part in the project, the school administrators got involved in planning meetings, developing activities and discussing aims. Results showed that, regardless of the social environment in which the work with genre is developed, the work with didactic sequences can be very productive to learners. Results also pointed out that students' capacities should be taken into consideration when evaluating the textual production process of a certain genre.

In short, even though the differences between results from each school showed distinct literacy contexts, they pointed out the possibility of literacy development even in unfavorable social environments. If, on the one hand, quantitative growth was more evident in the public school, because early productions were further from the genre features, on the other hand, qualitative growth between early and final productions in both schools was significant and reveals the importance of consistent work on genre teaching in schools.

2. THEORETICAL SUPPORT

2.1 *Genre and the socio-discursive interactionist theory*

This study is based on the socio-discursive interactionist theory (Bronckart, 1999, 2006). It conceives the text as a *communicative unit* (Bronckart, 1999), that is, as a tool that provides *social interaction* with the environment and individuals. In this theory, the concept of genre is fundamental and represents the incorporation of Bakhtin's notion of genre (1979). For Bakhtin, genres are types of utterances which are relatively stable; and such utterances, in turn, are concrete and unique language productions in discourse.

School activities based on this theoretical support let teachers distance themselves from traditional practices, in which textual production is merely taken as an instrument for student assessment. Distancing itself from this traditional perspective on textual production, the present study presents a proposal that predicts the acquisition of textual genre dimensions by the students.

Based on empirical analysis of many texts (Bronckart et al., 1985), Bronckart (1999) proposes a general scheme called textual architecture of superposition. It distinguishes three superimposed structural levels which are presented as part of the textual layering: textual general infrastructure, textual mechanisms and enunciation mechanisms.

The **first layer** of analysis answers the methodological necessity of revealing the complex scheme of textual organization. The concept of discourse type is essential here. According to Bronckart (1999), discourse types are explained based on two parameters: 1) the context of production (implication versus autonomy); and 2) the construction of the referent (conjunction versus disjunction). In this case, discourse types and their constitution are the following: '*discourse in situation*' (implication and conjunction), '*interactive account*' (implication and disjunction), '*theoretical discourse*' (autonomy and conjunction), and '*narration*' (autonomy and disjunction).

That way, in this first textual layer some aspects are focused on: the general plan (textual thematic organization); discourse types (linguistic organizational forms that allow present segments types); articulations between discourse types (ways in which discourse types are chained or merged in a text); sequences (narration, description, argumentation, explanation, dialogue, and injunction) and other planning forms (script and scheme) which compose the text infrastructure.¹

The *textual mechanisms* (**second layer**) are in charge of the thematic coherence. In such mechanisms, hierarchical, logical and/or temporal articulations are constituted. That textual layer, therefore, mobilizes three mechanisms: connection, nominal and verbal cohesion.

The **third textual layer** is the one related to mechanisms of enunciation positioning (*enunciation mechanisms*). These mechanisms contribute to the maintenance of the textual pragmatic coherence, reveal voices that are expressed and convey evaluations about aspects of the thematic content. Enunciation positioning, voices and modalizations are foundations of this textual layer.

¹ The concept of 'text sequence' is borrowed from Adam (1987) by Bronckart (1999).

2.2 *The socio-discursive interactionist theory and language teaching and learning*

The socio-discursive interactionism is the basis for the genre teaching proposal presented here. This theoretical framework is based on the principle that an implication is produced when a genre is worked with at school: such genre starts to be, at the same time, a communicational tool and learning object (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004). Adapting a social genre to a school environment means changing, at least partially, its function. “Therefore, it is not the same anymore, because it corresponds to another communicative context; only fictionally it continues to be the same, and the school is, in a certain point of view, a place where there is this pretense, which is, however, an efficient way of learning” (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004: 180). Certainly, something to be kept in mind is the importance that Vygotsky (1987) attributes to imitation games in children’s language acquisition processes.

Within the socio-discursive interactionist approach, Schneuwly and his group have developed a genre-based language teaching proposal which consists of the development of a didactic model of the genre to be taught, from which a didactic sequence is generated. A didactic model is a survey of knowledge about the selected genre, bearing in mind the teaching goals established. On the other hand, a didactic sequence is a set of teaching-learning sequential actions which must necessarily include an initial and a final written production. These writings function as a basis for the assessment of the students’ development as a result of the experiment.

The construction of a didactic model of the genre that is to be taught (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004) shows up the teachable dimensions of this genre. The principles on which this didactic model is based are:

- “Certain learning results that are expected and expressed in diverse official documents;
- Existing knowledge: linguistic (the functioning of genres according to specialists) and psychological (operations and procedures that are implicated in genre functioning and appropriation);
- Determination of capacities shown by the learners (which, in reality, does not allow us to define a zone of proximal development, but which allows us at least to draw some outlines).” (p. 180)

The didactic model provides “a potential object for teaching,” in the sense that a selection should be made taking the learners’ capabilities into consideration and also because such a model could not be taught if not supported by those principles.

The application of the proposed activities based on the socio-discursive and interactionist approach in school considers the concept of the student’s text as a communicative unit (Bronckart, 1999), that is, as a tool that allows a student to interact socially with the environment and with people, contrary to the traditional practice still in use in many Portuguese classes. Taking this reality and the notion of the didactic model into account, we come to the didactic sequence notion, which is seen, according to Schneuwly and Dolz (2004: 97), as “a set of activities that presents a limited and accurate number of objectives, which is organized considering a project of internalization of the dimensions that constitute a genre.” Therefore, the didactic sequence has, as its main aim, the teaching of a genre previously selected and, then, didactically developed through the student’s textual production. One of the main

steps that compose this set of activities is *early production*, in which the student produces a text in the genre that is to be learned in the didactic sequence, just making use of the previous knowledge he/she has about it. After this early production, there is the development of activities of characterization and differentiation of the selected genre from other similar genres, in order to make the student understand the characteristics that compose and determine that specific genre, within the communicational situation in which the genre is inserted. The sequence before the last step predicts the elaboration of an outline, which will serve as a basis for the *final production*. The final text produced by the student is compared to his/her early one, in an analysis that tackles both quantitative and qualitative aspects regarding differences between the first textual production and the last one.

2.3 *The didactic model of the detective story genre*

The genre chosen for the didactic sequence illustrated in this article was the *detective story*, mainly because mystery stories motivate 5th grade students to read a book. The *detective story* genre features are well outlined and easy to be identified by the reader. Besides, its characteristics generally reveal not only the genre presented in the story, but they also show fundamental characteristics to the comprehension of the narrative sequence. Such narratives always portray a mystery to be solved, such as a crime, a disappearance or a danger situation; classical characters which are physically and psychologically described according to their role in the plot; typical vocabulary related to a mystery story and two well defined archetypal temporal plans, according to Todorov (1970): the mystery or crime plan, which takes place in the past; and the investigation plan, narrated in the present.

To this author, the textual genre entitled *detective story*² is a result of the joining together of “two types of terror novel:” *noir novel*, also known as “story of the vulnerable detective,” in which the detective loses his immunity in the plot; as well as the enigma novel, which analyzes a personal crime.

The *detective (or mystery) story* constitutes a duality being that “this novel contains two stories: the crime story and the investigation” (Todorov, 1970: 96). The two “stories” coexist in the narrative. While characters from the crime story “act,” “tell what effectively happened,” characters from the investigation story “discover,” “explain how the reader (or narrator) found out about such story.” Analyzing these concepts, we can conclude that the first story, the crime one, is a kind of “starting point,” since the main interest comes from the second story, the one that deals with the investigation.

As shown in the previous section, genre modeling at school takes place through the adaptation of the genre’s characteristics by students. As the study participants were 11 or 12 years old, it was necessary to do some simplifications. In order to develop the didactic sequence, the following dimensions were chosen:

² *Although, for teaching goals, we have been dealing with the detective story as a genre, it constitutes, in reality, a set of genres, since those same features can be found in novels, short stories, movies as well as TV series.*

Regarding the general infrastructure (layer 1):

- a mystery and its solution, present in the narrative conflict and solution;
- classical characters, such as the detective, the police officer, the murderer, the thief, etc.;
- specific vocabulary, such as mystery, solution, investigation, police station, place of the event, etc.;
- presence of '*narration*' in order to guarantee an autonomous text in relation to the production situation, in contrast to a text dependant on the production situation, understood as a '*interactive account*' (Bronckart, 1999);
- development of elements of a narrative sequence (according to Bronckart, 1999: 220): introduction, complication, actions, resolution, final situation;

Regarding textual mechanisms (layer 2):

- the need for textual mechanisms that contribute to text autonomy and fictionalization: substitution of deictic elements, presence of the space-temporal origins that establish an axis of temporal reference in which the narration is developed; presence of a neutral narrator, in the third person; specific verb tenses, etc.;

Regarding enunciative mechanisms (layer 3):

- management of enunciative voices in the narrative: the narrator's voice (as a neutral narrator, in the third person, or as an empirical narrator, in the first person), the characters' voices, social voices (voices that are not spoken as agents, but are external instances of evaluation of content aspects).

3. METHOD

The schools where the project was developed were selected taking into consideration the fact that they represented different social realities. That is, one was public, located in the outskirts of Porto Alegre, and the other was private, located in the city center. The study³ consisted of an applied comparative exercise using a single didactic sequence based on the genre *detective story*, in two 5th grade elementary school classes. One of the classes was taught at a local government-run public school, located in a lower class neighborhood and offering only an incomplete elementary education (up to the 5th grade). The other class was taught at a religious-oriented private high school, located in a central region of Porto Alegre. Both schools were located in the same geographical region, the greater Porto Alegre area. The didactic sequences were applied in 2005. In the public school, their application occurred in the Portuguese classes, once a week, from May to October. In the private school, the application of the didactic sequences also occurred in the Portuguese classes, in a continuous way, during the weekly classes for about two months. This time difference in the application of the proposal is due to the fact that the staff in the local

³ This project was supported by the CNPq (National Research Council). This article was translated from Portuguese to English by Angélica Scherer.

government-run public school had already been working with didactic sequences for 2 years, while in the private school, before the sequence application, there were meetings with the pedagogical coordinators and the class teacher to familiarize them with use of this methodology.

The teachers in charge of developing the didactic sequences were the classes' own teachers, aided by the project's researchers. In the local government-run public school, as the project's researcher had already developed other didactic sequences in class, he/she helped the class teacher in her work.

The schools agreed to participate in the project, that is, the schools' pedagogical supervisors were involved in planning and discussing the results, being able to express their opinions during the development of the activities.

Two researchers from the project, one in the local-government-run public school and the other in the private school, were in charge of the workshops through which the didactic sequences were applied. Both project researchers were allowed to record all the different moments of any class session. Many observation moments were proposed: before the beginning of the work with the didactic sequence, in the class in which the sequence was presented, once a week during the workshops (which lasted 1 hour each time), and in the final meeting. The observations included audio and video recordings, followed by written transcriptions. The transcriptions took into consideration the audio and video recordings, the written notes and the participants' observations.

The data were analyzed from a process point of view, that is, considering the students' written texts and the different interpretations they produced in different language activities. The analysis also included the comparison of the comments from many students and teachers related to the proposed activities. Each student's early and final productions were examined according to the dimensions which were mentioned in section 2.3.

Later on, comments and productions were compared, as pertaining to different groups, in order to verify the effects of the didactic sequences in the two selected groups. The early and final texts produced by students from both schools were analyzed according to Bronckart's (1999) notion of textual architecture.

In the first textual "layer," the most evident thematic aspects were analyzed, such as the vocabulary, the typical characters and the presence and solution of a mystery, besides the discourse type and the discursive sequence used.

In the layer related to the textual mechanisms, anaphoric chains were verified, which facilitate the narrative textual organization, and references, a discursive resource that shows the student's ability in formulating reference sequences in the text. Temporal plans on which the narrative was based were also analyzed.

Finally, in the third layer, enunciation mechanisms were observed, which have great importance in the genre characterization. Voices present in the text were emphasized: the kind of narrator, the presence of characters and social voices, and the voice of the empirical author.

In this article, we intend to present our data using a qualitative approach. In this sense, we did not give prominence to the statistical aspects. We show frequencies and proportions as a way to highlight the descriptions. This means that quantitative measures are seen as a feature of our qualitative research. The analyses involve ex-

PLICIT interpretations of the meanings of pedagogical actions, with quantifications playing a subordinate role.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The didactic sequence was carried out, in both groups, according to the outline below, organized through workshops. In the private school, as a result of factors related to the school organization, it was not possible to carry out workshop 13, because the students had started taking exams. This same workshop, in the local-government-run public school, focused on the textual productions of students of another public school, where the didactic sequence was initially tested by one of the project researchers, who taught Portuguese there. The outline of the didactic sequence is as follows:

- **Students' early productions:** the teacher briefly introduced the project, mentioned its aims and asked the students if they knew terror, mystery, crime and detective stories. After that, students were asked to write their early production of a detective story. The topic selected by the students was "my classmate's disappearance...."
- **Workshop 1:** Characterization of the detective story genre with the students through questions such as, "Has anyone here already read detective stories, watched them on TV or at the movies?", "Do you know a book, movie, story or even a famous detective?", "Which?". After reading the text, "The mysterious call" (Cazaré, 1991), the main aspects of the detective story genre were discussed: typical vocabulary of detective stories; the presence of suspense, fear and mystery; tale characteristics related to its structure, such as time, space, complication, actions and resolution; characters' analysis – the detective and the possible antagonist; the existence of two parallel stories – one in the past regarding the crime or mystery; and the other story in the present, related to the investigation of the crime/mystery. In this workshop, the cover of Cazaré's book was also analyzed, for its images illustrating central characteristics of a detective story, such as suspense, mystery and investigation.
- **Workshop 2:** Identification of the text with detective story characteristics, through comparison with three texts of different genres (fairy tale, detective story and terror story).
- **Workshops 3 to 7:** Presentation of the book "The red virus" (Carr, 1991), which was used in the development of the workshops. Title and cover analysis, from which the students drew a series of inferences about a possible narrative development. Students were asked to read the book in parts. In each workshop, students were asked to fill up a "reading diary," which helped in the genre characterization by identifying actions that happened in the chapter and by the challenge of inferring the actions of the following chapters. After reading all the narrative, students were asked to organize a poster with the complete sequence of the narrative (early situation, complication, resulting actions from the complication, resolution and final situation). In the last workshop, the reading diaries were brought together and received a cover elaborated by the students.

- **Workshop 8:** Beginning the production stage of the detective stories: The first task was developed in pairs and consisted of the configuration of an enigma. Students inferred characteristics that were previously analyzed in other detective stories, such as the use of vocabulary and suitable verb tenses, the presence of hints, of mystery, the sequence of actions, etc. At the end of this workshop, the material developed by the students was collected in order to check the progress of the story construction, which was supposed to be completed through the following workshops.
- **Workshop 9:** Rereading the mystery stories that were produced in the prior class, *an outline* was elaborated *in order to complete a detective story*. In this outline, the main characteristics that a detective story should contain were established, as guilty characters, victims, investigators, the reasons for the crime/mystery, etc. Both mystery stories and outlines were collected for analysis.
- **Workshop 10:** Having in view the mystery story and the outline previously developed, students were asked to individually write the final production of the detective story.
- **Workshop 11:** After the teacher's and the group project's analyses of the final productions, a proofreading work was developed, to help students improve their detective story, mainly in terms of textual organization and characteristics of the genre in question. This workshop had the aim of rewriting texts that were produced in the prior workshop, starting with the collective elaboration of essential criteria for a detective story. Having such criteria in mind, each student evaluated his/her own final text and checked the need to rewrite it.
- **Workshop 12:** The whole class was given narratives for reading and commentary. In groups, students selected 5 narratives to be "published" in a special book. Criteria for such selection were the genre characteristics. After the selection, the chosen narratives were read to the class.
- **Workshop 13:** Students received a book containing the 5 best detective stories they selected. They also received another book containing the 5 best detective stories from the 5th grade class from another school where the same didactic sequence was developed. After individual reading, students were distributed in 5 groups. Each group analyzed one of the stories from the other 5th grade class and discussed necessary modifications, adding other ideas to the story. This activity provides a kind of communicational exchange which, according to the socio-discursive interactionist theory, gives texts a broader communicative purpose. The "new stories" were read to the class and handed in to the teacher, who returned them to the original class where they were produced.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The dimensions mentioned in section 2.3 were verified in the students' early and final productions. They allowed the elaboration of two figures, one related to the performance of students from the local government-run public school (Figure 1),

and the other related to the performance of students from the private school (Figure 2).

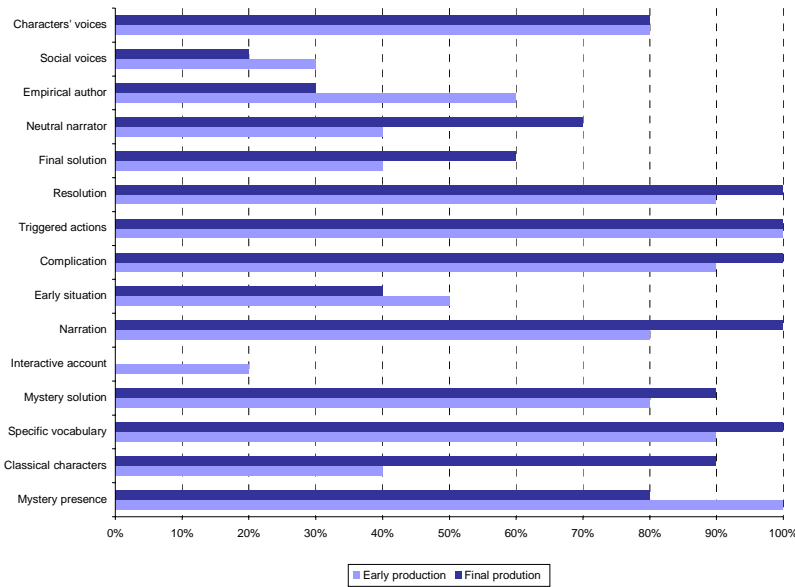


Figure 1: Comparison between the local-government-run public school students' early and final productions

Taking the results into consideration, it is possible to observe a considerable increase in, at least, ten relevant aspects in the textual production of the detective stories between the early and the final productions in the local government-run public school. The quantitative approach indicated that the students' production was more significant in the local government-run public school than in the private one, probably because of factors regarding the literacy environment that surrounded the students. In the public school, the detective genre had never been treated in such detail as it was during the application of the didactic sequence. Therefore, when producing their early text, many children did not use aspects of the genre's thematic content (Table 1).

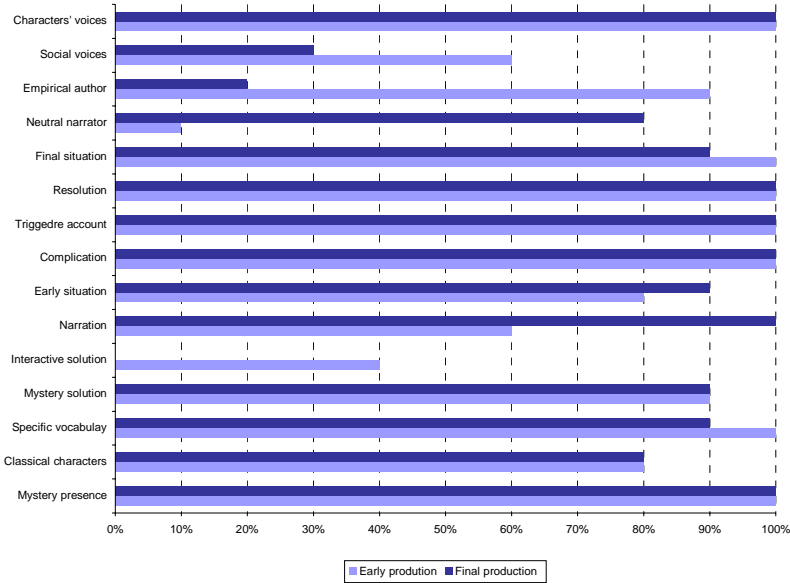


Figure 2: Comparison between the private school students' early and final productions

Table 1: Early production compared with final production

Category	Early production	Final production
Presence of mystery	82%	100%
Classical characters	40%	82%
Specific vocabulary	82%	100%

A student's early and final productions from the local government-run public school exemplify the findings⁴:

Initial production

“One day Vinicius disappeared in a bar without a sign. So I started looking for him.

Final production

“On a mysterious day there was a murder at the Dortmund village and the police arrive at

⁴ Students' spelling mistakes were not translated from Portuguese to English. The original Portuguese versions of these texts are available in appendixes 1, 2 and 3.

<p>(...) After untying him from the chair he said that he gets in through a hole that ends behind the kitchen. The shadow that I had seen was the thief.”</p>	<p>the crime scene. There the police found a person looking at the bleeding corpse. This person was called Waly Douglas (...) The policeman went back to his office and investigated the dead woman’s body and it did not seem she had been beaten up. (...) He found a knife in the same police officer’s pocket that had asked to see Waly Douglas. This proved that he was guilty and his name was James Terry (...) he was arrested and confessed that he called Waly Douglas to his house. Meanwhile, he ran away. Waly Douglas was set free and the police officers apologized to him.”</p>
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The early characters, “my classmate and I”, turned, in the final production, into typical characters from detective stories, even with English names, probably as a result of several exercises done during the workshops. “Bleeding,” “dead woman’s body,” “it did not seem she had been beaten up,” are expressions that result from the readings. There is a very important achievement in this kind of work: a literacy level that can be called literary, since the final production displays previously non-existent fictional aspects typical of detective literature.

The difference between the early productions and the final ones is also revealed in the discourse type: the ‘interactive account’ becomes a ‘narration’. Another example shows how the student started to fictionally formulate his/her text, making it autonomous from the production situation:

Early production	Final production
<p>“The person who disappeared was Ramon. Ramon disappeared in the classroom went to the restroom I did not see him anymore I just saw his tennis shoes how come where is Ramon disappeared after that nobody saw him escaped. And Suysi Márcia investigated and nothing of Ramon, where is Ramon, one day I (...)”</p>	<p>“Once upon a time Fabi and Cristina was going for a walk, and they were killed and my friend recommended a detective his name was Marcio and he found fingerprints and a piece of blouse (...)”</p>

The move from ‘interactive account’ to ‘narration’ was also observed in the private school:

Early production	Final production
<p>“Our class was very educated, Rodrigo was the only naughty student, and the richest, and for this reason he was always robbed. On Thursday he did not go to class and everybody found that strange because he had never missed class. When the class finished I</p>	<p>“One day a school called xxx wanted to go for on a field trip, but they did not know where to go. Many people made different suggestions, but none was good. Diego said: - Teacher, why don’t we go to haunted</p>

called his house and his mother answered the mansion?
phone (...)” - It’s a good idea.”

In fact, in both schools the presence of the ‘narration discourse type’ was, quantitatively, the most evident result of the didactic sequence:

Table 2: Presence of narration discourse type

Presence of ‘narration discourse type’	Local-government-run school	public	Private school
Early production	80%		60%
Final production	100%		100%

This feature is reinforced by the increasing use of a neutral narrator in the final productions, while, in the early productions, empirical narrators predominated, which is also a characteristic of the ‘interactive account discourse type’:

Table 3: Presence of third person narrator

3 rd person narrator	Local-government-run public school	Private school
Early production	40%	10%
Final production	65%	80%

The comparison between both schools clearly displays an aspect tied to the social distinctions between the two literacy environments. Since the early productions, it was noticed that most children from the private school class already knew the genre in question. A greater offer of reading materials in the family environment and a greater quality and variety of these materials provided by the school were decisive in determining the differences in relation to the early productions.

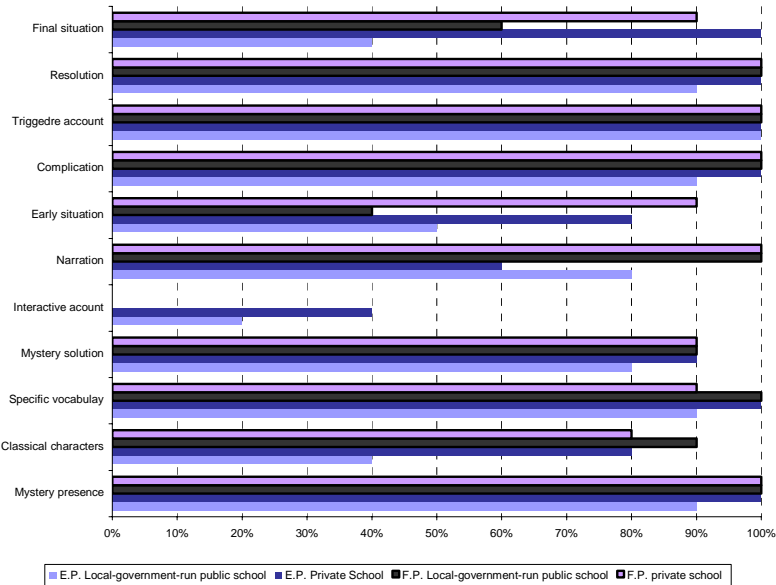


Figure 3: Comparison between both schools

Such differences, however, in case of the local-government-run public school, were compensated by the application of the didactic sequence. The thematic content typically conveyed by detective stories was also suitable for most of the students from the local-government-run public school in their final production. In the private school, another suitable factor was evident, the one related to the implementation of discourse types. Probably, since the students from the local-government-run public school had already dealt with other didactic sequences involving genres from the ‘narrated world’ (Bronckart, 1999) in previous classes (Guimarães, 2006), their early texts were already autonomous from the production situation, taking already the ‘narration’ form. The transformation from an ‘interactive account’ into a ‘narration’ was the greatest achievement from the work developed in the private school.

In spite of verified differences between each of the school results, the didactic sequence was perceived as a set of activities that allow the students the internalization of particular dimensions of a specific genre. However, it is very important to emphasize the role of the literacy environment in the school textual production, because that role is related to crucial aspects to be analyzed in texts from a certain class.

From the results of the present research it is possible to say that the same didactic sequence can show effective results in classes with different literacy contexts.

6. CONCLUDING AND PLANNING

The developed study corroborated Schneuwly's assertion (2002) that people learn how to write by the internalization of writing devices, in the Vygotskian view which says that this internalization transforms the relation among the psychic processes of language production. According to Schneuwly, research studies in language teaching show that the learning of writing consists in the "transformation of a system through the construction of a new system that reorganizes in another way the different components which intervene in the production of a text" (2002: 242).

In both elementary schools' 5th grade classes, text analysis indicated that the work with didactic sequences around a certain genre produces a favorable impact on the students' text. Interviews, carried out with students from the local-government-run public school, revealed the students' evaluations of the experiences with the "writing workshops." All the students used the same adjective to express their evaluations: "good." Their reasons varied: "*Because before I didn't get to think like this to write my story(ies). Now I'm thinking in a better way. I make up better story(ies)*" (Girl B, 11 years old, public school); "*Now I'm writing in a better way. Before this, I wanted to finish everything quickly, you know? Then I did everything very fast. Now I am calm to write, I don't write so fast*" (Girl G, 10 years old, public school). All the students showed improvement.

The analysis of the students' productions reveals important transformations in their language abilities. The analyzed texts show that difficulties related to the organization of narrative sequences were practically solved and that the thematic content domain which is peculiar to the detective story genre was achieved. Most students felt able to mobilize and organize, in a suitable way, the thematic content that was compatible with the genre, as a result of different narrative sequence steps, chaining the characters' actions in the progression of the enigma solution, in the case of the detective story genre.

We are convinced that, as language and teaching concepts involve the individual, history, culture and society (Vygotsky, 1987), the development of cognitive capacities, emphasizing the superior ones, can be seen as a product of the activities performed in socio-cultural institutions. This view gives the school a fundamental role in the students' cognitive development.

In this way, in the development of didactic sequence, the teacher's role is very important. This was exactly the greatest difficulty found in the experiment. Results encouraged both teachers that took part in the project, but they did not assure that the teachers would propose new didactic sequences. This was the most serious obstacle found in terms of genre teaching, from the viewpoint of the socio-discursive interactionist theory. A very strong theoretical grounding is supposed to be the basis of the didactic action, but this basis can remain alien to the elementary school teacher if he/she does not receive specific support. At the same time, it is necessary to be alert to what teachers understand by working with genre (Guimarães, 2005), because something that must be clear is the difference between working with a genre as communicative unit adapted to a certain situation, and working with the discourse types that are present in this genre.

Recently published books that ground the work with genre (such as Barbosa, 2001; Souza, 2003; Machado, Lousada & Abreu-Tardelli, 2004) can help the development of teaching in that direction. Investment in the domain of this practice and in educational systems takes a long time and should be maintained. We still believe that the way to change the Brazilian school reality is through serious educational work, involving teaching practices and their evaluation, doing and redoing language actions in an interaction between researchers of mother tongue teaching/learning and elementary school teachers.

At the end of this report, it is fitting to include a teacher's commentary from the private school about the work carried out:

TEACHER K: (T)he didactic sequence about detective stories was a little... was different because my productions, they are based on the text we read, on which we work, or on any subject that arises, from the present time... and it was something in which they read a part of the book in every class... and they reeeaaally liked that. **They thought that was veery interesting.** They wanted to take the book home, 'Ah! Teacher!' So they liked that, that fascinated me, maybe ... it was the part that... I think they enjoyed more, you know. As the book is interesting, when they had to stop ... in a certain unit... then they wanted to know more. So I thought it was very nice and they also liked it a lot. Till the time we commented, what do you think of the project? They talked about the book, you know, they soon came back this way. Even Denise asked them and they soon said that the story was very cool, because then we produced a text in the beginning, before reading, and another after. But what's the basic difference from the ones I deal with? **It's because my productions are either based on a text, so it's something like that, from the present time,** or on an up-to-date subject, which is also from the present time. Or I propose any other subject to them, then they do the textual production. **So I think that it was different because here some work had been developed, hadn't it? And suddenly at the end this way they already had in mind what to write (...)**

This account from one of the private school teachers, who was used to working on textual productions with students in a continuous way, but with different subjects and genres, shows that the proposed project, based on the socio-discursive interactionist theory, was successful. As a conclusion, taking different social realities into consideration, the results of the present research show the benefits of working with didactic sequences in a certain genre based on the socio-discursive interactionist approach. However, the use of this methodology by school teachers grounded on similar theoretical construct as we have used in this research is another issue to which a teacher's undergraduate course can be a starting point.

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APPENDIX A

Initial production

“Num dia Vinícius sumiu dentro de um bar com nenhum sinal. Então comecei a procurar. (...)”

Depois de desamarrá-lo da cadeira ele contou que ele entra por um buraco que acabava atrás da copa.

A sombra que eu tinha visto era o ladrão.”

Final production

“Em um dia misterioso ocorre um assassinato na vila Dortmund e a polícia chega no local do crime. Lá a polícia acha uma pessoa olhando para o morto sangrando. Ele se chama Waly Douglas (...)”

Voltou para seu escritório e foi investigar o corpo da morta e não parecia ter sido espancada. (...) Achou uma faca no bolso do mesmo policial que tinha falado para ver Waly Douglas. Provou que ele era o culpado e o nome dele era James Terry (...) foi preso e assumiu que ligou para Waly Douglas ir na sua casa. Enquanto isso, ele fugiu. Waly Douglas foi solto e os policiais pediram desculpas a ele.”

APPENDIX B

Initial production

“Quem sumio foi Ramon. O Ramon sumio na sala de aula foi no banheiro não vi mais ele so vi seu tênis ue cadê Ramon sumiu depois da quilo minguen viu mas ele escapou. E Suyzi Márcia investiguemos e nada do Ramon cadê Ramon umdia eu (...)”

Final production

“Era uma vez Fabi e Cristina estava passeando, e mataram elas e a minha amiga me indicou um detetive ele se chamava Marcio e encontrou empreensões digitais e um pedaço de blusa (...)”

APPENDIX C

Initial production

“A nossa turma era muito educada, o único bagunceiro era o Rodrigo e o mais rico e por isso sempre era assaltado.

Numa quinta-feira ele não foi para aula e todos estranharam por que ele nunca tinha faltado aula. Quando acabou a aula eu liguei para a casa dele e a mãe dele atendeu (...).”

Final production

“Um dia **uma escola chamada XXX** queria fazer um passeio, só que não sabiam para onde iam. Uns davam uma idéia e outros davam outras idéias, só que nenhuma era boa.

O Diego falou:

- O professora, porque nós não vamos a mansão mal assombrada?

- É uma boa idéia.”

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